

K. Northampton County of
Preservative Society
DEVOTIONAL HELP

FOR SUCH AS HAVE BEEN ASSISTED BY THE
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE *698. e/3*
PRESERVATIVE SOCIETY; *3*

O R,
SHORT MEDITATIONS,
THANKSGIVINGS, AND PRAYERS,
FOR THE USE OF
PERSONS PRESERVED IN GREAT DANGER,
O R
RECOVERED FROM APPARENT DEATH,
A N D
RESTORED TO THEIR FRIENDS,
BY MEANS (UNDER GOD) OF THE
PRESERVATIVE SOCIETY,
ESTABLISHED IN THE COUNTY OF
NORTHAMPTON,

1789.

“And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in
“Thee.” Psalm xxxix. 8.

“Offer unto God thanksgiving.” Psalm l. 14.

L O N D O N:

Printed by JOHN NICHOLS;
And sold by Him, and Messrs. LACY, Booksellers
at NORTHAMPTON, for the Benefit of the Society—

[Price 6d.]

Entered at Stationers Hall.

P R E F A C E.

AS this is not the first benevolent plan of its kind, it is not to be expected that religious and devout advice and assistance are now first to be published for the benefit of those whose circumstances in cases of preservation from danger, or a most happy recovery from apparent death, require the exertion of the powers of a thankful heart.

Some excellent sermons, with small devotional tracts, have already been put into the hands of persons so preserved by God and man; and, no doubt, they have had a good effect.

There is no absolute necessity therefore for this small present, it may be

said: be it allowed. But, as Holy Scripture enjoins precept upon precept, line upon line; and as it has been suggested, by the first mover of our County Preservative Society, that it might be useful and proper for the clergy, members of the first committee of this laudable institution, to throw in their mite in this way also; they, ever willing (God grant their success may be equal to their wishes,) to contribute their share to the glory of God, and the salvation of mankind, both here and hereafter, do humbly offer this short Manual of Meditations, Thanksgivings, and Prayers, taken almost entirely from Holy Scripture, or ancient forms of devotion, to JOHN ENGLISH DOLBEN, Esq; of *Finedon*, and the rest of the Subscribers and Benefactors to the NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PRESERVATIVE SOCIETY.

A D.

A D D R E S S.

CHRISTIAN READER, AND HEAVEN-
FAVOURED FRIEND.

WE call you by this latter name, because we suppose you to have been delivered from some most dangerous accident, and therefore willing to receive our spiritual assistance, as you have lately that of your charitable brethren in a very happy and awakening moment.

What we have to lay before you is short and plain: the shortness of it will enable you easily to remember it; the plainness of it will enable you thoroughly to understand it: when the knowledge and recollection of any thing are both made complete and secure, nothing is wanting but a steady and hearty application, which, one should hope, in cases like yours, will ever

be constant and earnest : we do not mean herein to instruct you in the first principles of your Christian duty, (that we suppose to have fallen to the lot of others ;) but our intention is, to offer you some meditations and devotions properly suited, or which, with very little alteration, may be suited, to the particular situations from which, through the means of the Preservative Society, you have been providentially delivered.

And we exhort and command you in the Lord, to attend to our word of instruction, given you in the spirit of brotherly love ; indeed, we trust, that your own conscience will be to you as good as a thousand advisers and remembrancers of this duty.

Though the County of Northampton is very far from the sea, yet a navigable river passes through the greatest part of it ; the eastern side is near the fens ; and there are many small brooks and rivulets in different parts of it, which, after sudden heavy and continued rains, rise to such a degree as to
render

render the passage through them difficult and dangerous, and often productive of fatal accidents.

Upon this account therefore, and because the language of Holy Scripture abounds with images and likenesses taken from rivers of waters and the great deep, do we apply to you, as most probably having been rescued from a watery grave; the poetical and mournful strains of holy David, when himself was in danger from his enemies on every side, are expressed in the same turn of thought.

Many of the beautiful descriptions of other prophets also, when speaking of the calamities brought upon the nations by war, idolatry, or sin, are illustrated by the same comparison.

There want not also scriptural expressions, in bold and striking language, to be applied to the element of fire, where we are surrounded by it, or to its dreadful effects, by suffocation or choaking.

The

The Almighty hath the command of, and setteth bounds to, the fire as well as the water; and saith to it in its full rage and fury, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud flames be stayed." God can quench the violence of fire; he can save men, pulling them out of the fire; he can cause, that the fire shall have no power upon their bodies; or if, like the poor man's son in the Gospel, we oft-times fall into the fire, and oft-times into the water *, yet Jesus can rebuke both elements so that they shall not hurt us.

He can turn aside the edge of the sword, or any deadly weapon lifted up against us.

Many perilous accidents there are from numberless causes, to which frail mortality is subject; but God has the sovereign disposal of them all: He suffers every thing to take place according to his good plea-

* This should caution all persons subject to fits, to keep a safe distance from both fire and water at all times; and to have wire-screens for fire, when alone. Female-dress is indeed always doubly exposed to fire.

sure ;

A D D R E S S. ix

sure; and under him, and by his blessing, our brethren and fellow Christians often assist and save the lives one of another; but until the present age, fruitful in some good works, never have men attempted by method and rule, as a Society, to restore in many cases to life those that were seemingly dead beyond hopes of recovery.

MEDITA.

ALICE

MEDITATIONS

AND

EJACULATIONS.

IN the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased? Yet, O Lord God most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

I have lately escaped from an untimely death. Thanks to Almighty God for his infinite mercies; and to the charitable assistance of my helpful neighbours. Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts, shut not thy merciful ears unto our prayers; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God
most

12 MEDITATIONS AND

most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee.

Thou hast saved me, O God, though the waters were come in even unto my soul. I was come into deep waters, so that the floods ran over me.

The floods had risen, O Lord, the floods had lift up their voice, the floods had lift up their waves. The waters are mighty, and rage horribly; but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier. It is the Lord, who commandeth the waters; it is the glorious God, who maketh the thunder; that casteth forth his lightning, with the rain, hail, snow, and vapours, wind and storm fulfilling his word. Wherefore unto Him will I cry in my trouble, Deliver me, Lord, out of my distress! withdraw not thou thy mercy from me! Let thy loving kindness, and fear, and truth, alway preserve me! O God make speed to save me, O Lord make haste to help me.

The

EJACULATIONS. 13

* The waters compassed me about, even unto the soul. The depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapt about my head. † I went down to the bottom of the mountains, the earth with her bars was about me for a time; yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayers came in unto Thee, into thy holy temple. Therefore will I sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving, I will pay that I have vowed; ‡ I will receive

* What a natural, and therefore elegant, description is this of a drowned man, by the pen of an Oriental Prophet, 2651 years ago; for Jonah is supposed to have written 862 years before Christ. It exactly answers to the appearance of a body just drawn out of our rivers at this day, and given into the hands of the medical assistants of the Preservative Society.

† This may give us the picture of a person that has fallen into a mine, a stone-quarry, or coal-pit.

‡ This should remind all persons, that it is their duty to receive the Holy Sacrament, more particularly as soon as possible after deliverance from danger.

B

Above

14 MEDITATIONS AND

ceive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Salvation is of the Lord alone, and of none other besides Him. Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord; Lord hear my voice! O let thine ears consider well my mournful complaint, for I am helpless and poor, and my heart is wounded within me.

Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness, and in the deep. O God, Thou knowest my wickedness, and my sins are not hid from

Above all, women at their churching should remember, ere it be too late, that in their name the minister asks and answers the question:

Psalms 116. v. 11, 12. What reward shall I give unto the Lord: for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?

I will receive the cup of salvation: and call upon the name of the Lord.

They pledge themselves both to God and man for their obedience; and let them well consider, what will be the end of their neglect.

Thee;

EJACULATIONS. 15

Thee; therefore thine indignation lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast vexed me with all thy storms. Yet, O cast me not utterly away; and be Thou not exceeding wrathful against thy poor servant, but according to thy mercy think Thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness.

Hear now my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling; hold not thy peace at my tears; O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen.

SCRIPTURAL THANKSGIVINGS.

THE Lord is my strength and my song; and is become my salvation. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me. Thou, O Lord, hast graciously kept my life from them that go down into the pit. I will give thanks for a remembrance of thy goodness; for I now joyfully feel that thy anger endureth but a moment, and in thy favour is life. In my health and prosperity, I said, I shall not be removed; but Thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was instantly troubled: then cried I unto Thee, O Lord, and thus did I make my supplication before Thee.

What

THANKSGIVINGS. 17

What profit is there in my blood when I go down into the pit! shall the clay-cold tongue give thanks unto Thee, or shall it declare thy truth!

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; Lord, be Thou my helper; then, O God, will I give thanks unto Thee for ever. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who hath saved my life from destruction, and crowned me with mercy and loving-kindness. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering and of great goodness: he will not, like froward men, always be chiding, neither keepeth He his anger for ever: He hath not dealt with me according to my sins, nor rewarded me according to my deservings: for look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth; so great is the difference between God's mercy and our guilt. Look how wide the east also is from the west; so far hath he set our sins;

18 THANKSGIVINGS.

from us. Yea like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him, for He knoweth whereof we are made, He remembereth that we are but dust. But his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him; and his righteousness upon children's children.

I will therefore praise the Lord while I live; as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God.

O praise God in his holiness: praise Him in the firmament of his power.

Praise Him in his noble acts: praise Him according to his excellent greatness.

Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet: praise Him upon the lute and harp.

Praise Him in the * cymbals and dances: praise Him upon the strings and pipe.

Praise Him upon the well-tuned cymbals: praise Him upon the loud cymbals.

* Those were instruments used in the religious exercises amongst the Jews.

THANKSGIVINGS. 19

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord *.

* There cannot be devised a greater variety, nor a more expressive method of celebrating the divine praise than this, so long since pointed out and enforced by holy David: the only misfortune is, that we will not apply them with the earnestness that we ought. There is great spirit as well as expression throughout the Scriptures; but we fear too many hearts are cold, and therefore little spiritual profit arises to them. Let them consider God's presence, and be earnest.

PRAYERS,

P R A Y E R S,

PARTAKING ALSO OF THE NATURE OF

T H A N K S G I V I N G S.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all comfort! Thou art the great refreshment of our souls, the constant preserver and support of our bodies: by Thee I have been holden up ever since I was born; and by thy especial goodness it is that I have been preserved from my late most dangerous accident, and near approach unto death; and that my weak body has since been refreshed with quiet and comfortable rest. Great and numberless have been thy mercies to me, O God, for which I desire with an humble and thankful heart to bless and praise thy holy name. O! that a sense of thy infinite goodness may be always present to my mind! that so the remembrance

THANKSGIVINGS. 21

brance of thy past favours may beget in me such an humble reliance on thy fatherly and good providence, that I may wholly resign myself to thy disposal in all things, and entirely submit to all thy dealings towards me. I confess, O Lord, that I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies; and, if Thou shouldest deal with me as I have deserved, I could expect nothing but the severities of thy wrath and displeasure.

But, O Thou, whose property is always to have mercy, be not extreme, I pray Thee, to mark what I have done amiss; but for thy dear Son's sake pardon all my sins, receive me to thy favour, without which I must of all creatures be the most miserable. O! may I never abuse thy patience! but may thy fear be always before my eyes, that I may not sin against Thee, but, giving up myself entirely to thy service, I may strive in all things to obey thy blessed will, to keep a conscience clear of offence both towards Thee, and all mankind!

To

To this end, Lord, grant me the assistance of thy holy spirit, for of myself I am not able to please Thee ; my nature is corrupt, and wretchedly inclined to what is evil : I am every way beset with temptations, and my own experience sadly shews me how easily I am drawn aside by the deceiver of souls. But, O Thou that art the Saviour of all them that put their trust in Thee, deliver me, I beseech Thee, from that cruel enemy who is daily lying in wait to destroy : be Thou my strong hold whereunto I may always resort, and evermore mightily defend me. Thou hast been my helper ever since I was born ; O leave me not to myself, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Lead me, I beseech Thee, in the way wherein I should go ; guide me by thy right hand, and lead me safely through the dangerous snares and temptations of this deceitful world ; and though Thou shouldest permit me to fall into severe trials, yet suffer me not, I beseech Thee, to be assaulted

THANKSGIVINGS. 23

faulted above what I am able to bear. Let no calamity ever drive me from Thee, nor any prosperity cause me to forget Thee; but grant that all the acts of thy providence towards me may work together for my good; for I assuredly believe that all my concerns are in the safest hands, when they are under the care and disposal of thy infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. Preserve me, O Lord, in my going out and my coming in; and let not any such calamity, or dangerous accident, again befall me.

Be Thou graciously pleased to take me and all belonging to me into thy fatherly care and protection.

Keep us in health and safety, in peace and innocence, in love and charity; and grant that, whilst we are passing through things temporal, we may be daily preparing for those that are eternal, through Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord, and only Saviour. Amen.

Almighty

24 THANKSGIVINGS.

Almighty and everlasting God, in whom I live, move, and have my being, and whose mercy is over all thy works; I, thy needy creature, in a thankful sense of thy good providence over me, render Thee my humblest praises and thanksgivings for thy preservation of me from the beginning of my life to this day. Blessed be thy holy name for thy continual protection, by which I have been defended amidst the changes and chances of this mortal life, and kept and delivered from innumerable dangers, and particularly from my late dreadful terror and evil accident. To thy watchful providence I entirely owe it, that, notwithstanding all my fear and most imminent danger, I am brought again into safety; for this and all thy other mercies, my soul doth bless, and magnify, thy glorious name; humbly beseeching Thee to accept this my sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, for his sake who actually did lie down in the grave, and rose again for the salvation of

THANKSGIVINGS. 25

of mankind, thy only Son, our Saviour
Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Gracious Father, if, through thy mercy, this and more days may be added to my life, I here devote both my soul and body to Thee, and thy service ; to promote thy glory, and my own salvation, in a sober, righteous, and godly life. I renounce the devil and all his works, the vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh ; desiring nothing so much as to serve Thee faithfully all the days of my life : and I sincerely resolve so to improve the time which Thou shalt be pleased to grant me, afresh as it were, in this world, that I may every day become a better Christian, and henceforth persevere in well-doing unto my life's end. In which resolutions do Thou, O merciful God, confirm and settle me ; and ever, henceforward, keep it stedfastly in the purpose of my heart to perform them ; that, as I grow in age, I may grow in grace, and in the knowledge

C

and

26 THANKSGIVINGS.

and steady obedience of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayers for Grace to perform that good
Resolution.

LORD, thou knowest the weakness and corruption of my nature, and the many temptations which I daily meet with; therefore, I now most earnestly beseech Thee to have compassion upon my infirmities, and to grant me the constant assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that I may be effectually held back from sin, and pushed on to my duty: but, if Thou seest me giving way to temptations, suffer me not to be tried above what I am able to bear, but stretch out thy helping hand to save and deliver me. Fix in my heart such a dread of thy judgments, and such a love of thy goodness, as may make me both afraid and ashamed to offend Thee. And, above all, keep up in my mind a lively remembrance of the last great day, in which I must give a strict account of my thoughts, words, and actions,
and

THANKSGIVINGS. 27

and according to the works done in the body, be everlastingly rewarded by Him, whom thou hast appointed the Judge of quick and dead, thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

O Lord! grant me grace to have Thee and thy laws always before my eyes, that I may walk according to thy will with watchfulness and care, and be able to give up my account with joy, and not with grief: keep me always sober and temperate in my use of meat and drink, and diligent in the calling and profession which thy providence hath appointed me. Grant me patience under any affliction Thou shalt see fit to lay upon me, and a mind always contented with my present condition. Give me grace to be just and true in all my dealings, quiet and peaceable among my neighbours, full of compassion towards the poor and afflicted, and ever ready to do good to all men, according to the power and opportunities which Thou shalt afford

28 THANKSGIVINGS.

me; that so, walking faithfully before Thee all my days, and being found watching, whenever my appointed time shall come, I may, from a life of imperfect righteousness here, be taken to a life of perfect happiness hereafter; but entirely through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer, in whose name and words I conclude my humble petitions; saying,

Our Father, which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THANKS.

T H A N K S G I V I N G.

Almighty and everliving God, who art the giver of life, and preserver of all mankind, I adore and magnify thy glorious name for all thy mercies from time to time bestowed upon me : but more particularly am I bound to address thy Divine Majesty, for thy late wonderful deliverance of me from the very jaws of death.

Bless, O Lord, all the members of the Preservative Society, and more especially those persons, who, through thy most merciful providence, have lately been so instrumental in my preservation. Give me, O Lord, a thankful sense of this fresh instance of thy loving-kindness towards me.

Graft in my soul the love of thy name, increase in me true Religion, nourish me with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep me in the same ; that when the time of my dissolution shall draw near, I may

30 THANKSGIVINGS.

be found prepared for the awful summons, and in the end be received into thine everlasting kingdom, there to partake eternally of such joys as it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. Grant this, I humbly beseech Thee, for the sake of Jesus Christ my Saviour, and most mighty Deliverer. Amen.

SHORT THANKSGIVING.

I give Thee most humble and hearty thanks, O merciful Father, for raising me up friends and benefactors ; by whose aid I have been restored to life and health : grant me grace, I beseech Thee, so to improve this remarkable instance of loving-kindness, both of God and man to me, that I may become a profitable member of the Christian Church and Common-wealth : and may at last be made partaker of immortal glory, at the final resurrection of

THANKSGIVINGS. 31

the dead, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

* * It is desired and expected, that every person receiving assistance from the County Preservative Society, do return humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God for the same, publickly, in their respective places of worship, as soon as they are able to attend divine service ; inserted here in the following words :
“ A. B. having received providential assistance from
“ the County Preservative Society in time of extreme
“ danger, desires to return humble and hearty thanks
“ to Almighty God for the same.”

If this variety of Prayers and Thanksgivings should seem to any too great, or too long, let every one use such only as appear best to suit their cases and necessities ; for no man's mind should be wearied and fatigued, but comforted and refreshed by devotion.

The

The following short form is earnestly recommended to all whom it may concern.

Every morning before the person, into whose hands this is given, goes out to work, or business, let this be said, lifting up the heart to God, not carelessly and in haste.

“ May the Lord preserve my going-out and my coming in from this time forth for evermore.”

Collect for Grace.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast safely brought me to the beginning of this day; defend me in the same with thy mighty power, and grant that this day I fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all my doings may be ordered by
thy

thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy fight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Every evening before going to bed, let this be said by the same person, and in the same manner.

“I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.”

Collect for Aid against Perils.

Lighten our darknes, I beseech Thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend me from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Such

Such as will not do this little from principles of duty and gratitude to the Great God, Father, and Preserver of our lives, must see, that they shall be found in the number of the most unthankful, thoughtless creatures.

Before the conclusion of the whole, let one thing be always most seriously remembered, and carefully guarded against;—that persons, who have been so greatly and remarkably preserved and favoured, as those to whom this is addressed, do never there-after turn this grace of God into lasciviousness, or, in a stronger expression of Holy Scripture, do despight unto the Spirit of Grace: let such never more be rash, presumptuous, heady, high-minded, for in this sense the first salvation is already passed, and a continuance to provoke God will certainly and speedily lead on to the second death, to that fiery indignation that will at the last utterly consume all those adversaries that change mercy into wrath,

CONCLUSION. 35

wrath, and patience and long-suffering into anger and unquenchable flames.

But, not to leave the subject with words and ideas too gloomy and melancholy upon the mind, let us imagine to ourselves the Blessed Saviour of the world thus speaking to the captive lately rescued from the grave; "Thy faith hath saved Thee: go in peace;" and then, with a look of infinite compassion, adding, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

THE END.

CONCLUSION.

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